

**QUESTIONS RECEIVED, WITH ANSWERS,
REGARDING THE NHLBI *COPD LEARN MORE BREATHE BETTER*® PARTNER
SUBCONTRACT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

- 1. The RFP states that it will recognize three levels of partnership and then goes on to discuss additional one-year subcontracts. Is this RFP funding both “partnerships” at one of the three levels and one-year subcontracts?**

Answer: The RFP is funding only one-year subcontracts for specific projects proposed by potential subcontractors. There is no separate funding for the general partnership categories described.

- 2. For clarification, this offering is for subcontract agreements not a grant?**

Answer: Correct, this RFP is not for grants; the term “grant” has a very specific meaning within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and requires different application procedures. This RFP is for subcontracts that will be administered under Porter Novelli’s contract with the NHLBI. A cover email used the word “grant” in error.

- 3. Is the main activity being sought a media/public awareness campaign?**

Answer: The NHLBI does not have a preconceived idea of the subcontract activity. We want to fund projects that help the campaign reach its goals as stated on page two of the RFP, and we believe there are many methods to do this effectively. We expect to receive proposals that address the campaign’s objectives in a variety of ways, depending on the skills, experience, audiences and resources of each organization.

- 4. Will NHLBI fund one entity that serves several states to get a bigger return on your investment? Can a proposal be submitted from a region?**

Answer: We leave it to potential subcontractors to structure their proposals in a way they believe will create the strongest project possible with the available resources. And yes, a proposal can be submitted from a region.

- 5. Can Canadian organizations apply for funding?**

Answer: Subcontract funding may only be spent in the United States.

- 6. What is the range of grants provided under this program announcement?**

Answer: The subcontracts will range from \$15,000 to \$50,000.

7. Can any organization apply or are the grants only available to non-profits?

Answer: Section 3, subcontract “Eligibility,” on page five of the RFP states “Applicants must be nonprofit organizations or state, county or municipal government agencies. When a task force, working group, consortium or coalition is involved, one organization must be the lead, with a single point of contact.”

8. Are there any suggested locations (United States cities) that are preferable for live educational programs?

Answer: No. No cities are suggested.

9. What is the best way to demonstrate an established presence in the community: organizational history, financial standing, etc?

Answer: We would expect that any organization capable of implementing a COPD education project will have some standing in the community that will allow it to marshal resources including but not limited to volunteers, management infrastructure, access to facilities, promotion, organizational leadership, financial resources or in-kind support. Please provide examples of past activity that demonstrate such capacity as succinctly as possible.

10. Do you require resumes of each of the personnel involved in the project (marketing, community relations, RRTs, RNs, health fair personnel, etc)?

Answer: Full resumes or CVs are not required, but we would like at least a brief bio giving us an indication of the experience and expertise of each person who would play a critical role.

11. For the marketing portion of the plan, is it enough to state “print, tv, radio ads” with an estimated cost or is a breakdown of the size of each ad and cost necessary?

Answer: The size of ads is not critical information to us unless you believe size is a key element in your plan.

12. For each project, there is a targeted audience (for instance, the COPD Health Fair will be utilizing 7 mailing lists targeting over 2100 people in addition to multiple media outlets), but I am unsure how many will respond. May I write this as “a potential audience of...”? Is a more complete breakdown of the mailing lists (COPD Breath of Life, Pulmonary clinic patients, Lakeshore Connection, etc.) required?

Answer: Potential audience reach is an acceptable amount of detail. It may be helpful to demonstrate your knowledge of the potential yield of your promotion efforts from past experience.

13. Are there any limitations on how the funds may be utilized (can we rent golf carts, provide alcohol at banquet, etc)?

Answer: This subcontract mechanism may not be used to provide alcoholic beverages. Other items that are reasonable to the functioning of an event and that are considered allowable under federal regulations can be included. We will work with individual subcontractors after awards are made to ensure that budgeted items are within federal government guidelines.

14. May we include pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies in our outreach (health fairs, etc)?

Answer: Your priority audiences are up to you to determine, but rationale should be included if they deviate from the campaign's priority audiences.

15. Is there anything you think we should know?

Answer: Everything that applicants need to know is addressed in the RFP.

16. What are the names and positions of the individuals who will be reviewing the grant applications and making decisions about funding?

Answer: A combination of marketing, communications and scientific professionals from the NHLBI and Porter Novelli will make the decisions. In federal government contracting, the review panel is not revealed in advance.

17. What is the timetable for decisions to be made and funds to be released and received by grantees for the grants?

Answer: Decisions will be made by September 2009, and subcontract funding will be available at some point in October or November 2009.

18. What party is administering the grant funds--Porter Novelli, NIH/NHLBI, or some other party, governmental or non-governmental? (Please specify the entity as it affects administrative costs)

Answer: Porter Novelli will be issuing and administering these funds as subcontracts under their larger contract with the NHLBI for support to the *COPD Learn More Breathe Better®* campaign. The funding is for subcontracts, not grants.

19. Are administrative costs (accounting and insurance at up to 15% of the total amount of the grant), an allowed line item for the grant budget?

Answer: As stated in the budget template provided, "Hourly rates should be fully loaded to include fringe benefits, overhead, and administrative fee." Since each organization will have its own way of calculating these costs, we have not established a maximum percentage for administrative costs.

20. How many contracts are expected to be awarded? What is the total funding available for this subcontract program? When will the twelve month subcontract time period begin?

Answer: We expect to award between 10 and 14 subcontracts. Total funding available is approximately \$400,000. The subcontract period will begin sometime in October or November 2009.

21. Are there any specific restrictions or limits (either by dollar amount or percentage) on how the subcontractor can use these funds to support planned activities?

Answer: No, there are no dollar or percentage limits on subcontractor use of funds. Refer to question 13 for more detail.

22. May we submit an Indirect Costs/Overhead line item in the budget? Is there a cap on that line item?

Answer: As stated in the budget template provided, "Hourly rates should be fully loaded to include fringe benefits, overhead, and administrative fee." We consider these to be indirect costs. Since each organization will have its own way of calculating these costs, we have not established a cap on that line item.

23. Are there any restrictions to costs in the budget such as incentives or food?

Answer: Refer to question 13.

24. Is the agency allowed to include indirect costs in the budget?

Answer: As stated in the budget template provided, "Hourly rates should be fully loaded to include fringe benefits, overhead, and administrative fee." We consider these to be indirect costs.

25. What is the date that an agency submitting a plan will hear if they received an award or not? What is the time frame for a one-year grant? Will the contracting agency have the full year to complete the proposed plan? Is there a specific start and end date?

Answer: We will announce contract awards in September 2009. Funding will become available sometime in October or November 2009. The time frame will be one year from the time the subcontracts are signed. Subcontractors will have one full year to complete proposed activities. At this point we do not have a specific start and end date; that is still to be determined.

26. What is the allowable percentage that an agency awarded monies can move between line items? For example, if travel expense is less than anticipated but copying expense was more, will the awarded agency be able to move from one line item to another as long as they do not go over the total awarded amount?

Answer: We do not have a specific regulation addressing this issue, but we would expect to be able to work with each subcontractor to manage slight fluctuations in budgets.

27. Of the "Offeror Representations and Certifications" form section (d) Representations required to implement provisions of Executive Order 11246-- (ii) It ___ not previously had contracts subject to the written affirmative action programs requirement of the rules and regulations of the Secretary of Labor, all previous questions in this section include either "it___has, or ___has not. What exactly is this asking? If the agency follows all rules and regulations regarding affirmative action, is the agency just to leave it blank? Any time there is a questions that does not apply, should the agency leave it blank?

Answer: The offeror should check “has” developed and has on file or “has not” developed and does not have on file, an affirmative action plan. If the question does not apply, you may write N/A.

28. Is a budget narrative required, along with the line item budget? If so, should we include that as part of the 10 page proposal or include it as an appendix?

Answer: A budget narrative is not required. If the budget spreadsheet is not self-explanatory, however, a budget narrative would be helpful. A budget narrative would not count toward the 10-page proposal limit.

29. Are the following allowable expenses?

- a. Indirect expenses (in-kind)**
- b. Training**
- c. Meals/food**
- d. Stipends for speakers/facilitators**
- e. Postage**
- f. Paid media (any types or limits?) vs. earned media**
- g. Co-branded marketing materials/promotional items**

Answer: All these expenses are allowable.

30. We've had a work group that has been meeting regularly and has developed and implemented some COPD outreach activities already. The group is interested in convening additional partners, as well as implementing COPD outreach activities. Is it feasible that we could apply for the mid-range subcontract (\$25-49,999) to expand our planning efforts (organizing convening meetings to expand our partner base & build broader consensus) as well as conduct at least 2 COPD community events?

Answer: You are the best judge of whether you can conduct that level of activity (convening additional partners, implementing outreach and two community events) within a specified budget. Tell us what you propose to do, and how much funding you request from the NHLBI to support the activity.

31. What constitutes an "event" versus ongoing activities on pg. 4 (Level of Activities)? What are the criteria (reach, target audience, # partners, etc.) to be considered an event? On the Learn More Breathe Better® website, several support groups are listed under "community events". Would these be considered events?

Answer: The RFP uses the language "events...and/or ongoing activities" to include all efforts that increase awareness and understanding of COPD. We are not concerned about a distinction between "events" and "activities;" the language was intended to be all inclusive. Our primary interest is that you have a specific plan that will reach at-risk audiences or health care professionals as effectively as possible.

32. Has a Logic Model been developed for the campaign with short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes, in addition to the campaign goals? If so, is that available to applicants?

Answer: A logic model is in development, but has not been completed and approved.

33. Is there a funding range for the third level of subcontracts or is it exactly \$50,000?

Answer: \$50,000 is the highest level of funding that will be provided.

34. Will there be a conference call to explain or discuss the implications of the "Reps & Certs" document for those organizations that haven't completed one in the past?

Answer: No, a conference call will not be held about the Offeror Representations and Certifications document.

35. It says to develop a one-year plan from the time the contract is awarded. Do you have a date when the contract will begin? For example, we have a specific activity this November we'd like to include in our proposal. Is that within the time frame?

Answer: We expect that the contract will begin sometime between October and November 2009, so it is probably unrealistic to plan for a major activity in November 2009. It would, however, be realistic to plan for November 2010, and the subcontract could be designed to begin December 1, 2009 to accommodate a major November 2010 activity.

36. Also it appears to me that you are weighing our ability to reach the target audiences as the most important factor. Is that correct?

Answer: Section 10 of the RFP, "Selection Criteria for Award" identifies how various criteria are weighted. We would agree that ability to reach the target audience is critical, but do not agree that is the single most important factor. The selection criteria reveal our emphasis:

- 25 points for a specific implementation plan,
- 10 points for "demonstrated knowledge, via the proposal, of processes that will support success (communication, project monitoring, evaluation, fiscal management, etc.).

Together these two criteria add up to more than one third of the weight, and show that the emphasis will be on a plan that is successful in reaching its goals.

37. The American Lung Association of the [region] is a 501 c 3 organization with a [multi]-state service region. Our staff in [one state], where a statewide COPD coalition already exists, will be applying for *third-level* grant funding. Our staff in [another state], where there is no coalition, would like to apply for *first-level* funding to initiate a coalition. Even though we are one 501 c 3 organization, we view these as different efforts emanating from two different states and utilizing different staff assigned to each state. Are we allowed to submit these two separate proposals for consideration, or are we limited to just one proposal?

Answer: We have not set any limitations on funding within geographic regions. Each proposal will be reviewed independently according to the selection criteria on page nine, Section 10.

Applicants are in a much better position than we are to determine what structure puts your proposal in the strongest position, so we have not put any restrictions on proposals in terms of structure, relationships or overlaps.

38. The RFP does not indicate when award decisions will be made or when project funding will begin. Please clarify.

Answer: Subcontracts will be announced in September 2009. Subcontracts will be signed and funding available in October or November 2009.